



## Driver and Rider Test and Instructor Statistics, Great Britain: Quarter 3 2013/14 (October – December 2013)

This publication presents information on driving and riding theory and practical tests conducted in Great Britain to 31 December 2013, and also statistics from the Approved Driving Instructor Register and the Integrated Register of Driver Trainers.

The test and instructor statistics are derived from data held by the Driving Standards Agency (DSA), which administers the driving test and training schemes in Great Britain.

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### The key findings include:

- There were 381,024 **car practical tests** conducted between October and December 2013, 1 per cent more than in the same quarter of the previous year. The **pass rate** for these tests was 46.6 per cent, marginally lower than the same period in 2012.
- There were 390,326 **car theory tests** conducted between October and December 2013, 24 per cent more than in the same quarter of the previous year. The **pass rate** for these tests was 50.5 per cent, 9.6 percentage points lower than in the same period of 2012, before 100 questions used in the theory test question bank were updated.
- The numbers of **motorcycle tests**, both theory and practical, were 47 to 49 per cent lower in October to December 2013 compared with the same period of the previous year. This reflects the continued after-effects of a rush to pass the practical tests before new restrictions on young motorcyclists were introduced in January 2013.
- The introduction of new questions in the **large goods vehicle (LGV)** and **passenger carrying vehicle (PCV)** multiple choice theory tests in May 2013 also caused a pass rate fall, and the number of tests is up by 24 per cent for LGV and 15 per cent for PCV.
- At the end of quarter 3, there were 43,289 **approved driving instructors** on the Register which is a drop of 4.6 per cent compared with the same quarter of the previous year. The number of riding instructors on the Statutory Register in this quarter is 2,647 which is 10.7 per cent lower than the same quarter of the previous year.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

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# 1. General context

The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) administers the driving test and training schemes in Great Britain. A driver or rider must pass both theory and practical tests in order to obtain full entitlement to drive a particular vehicle type on the road.

The total number of practical tests (which is dominated by car driving tests) has been on a downward medium-term trend, decreasing by 12% between 2007/8 and 2012/13. There are a number of factors potentially influencing this, including:

- Generally increasing practical **test pass rates**, meaning fewer candidates taking retests.
- A **demographic trend** of declining birth rates during the 1990s, meaning that there are now fewer young people in the peak age-group for driving tests (17-20). Population data suggests that this trend is likely to continue until late in the current decade, before reversing.
- The economic recession from 2008 may have discouraged some people from taking a test.

During the current financial year (2013/14), there have been increases in test volumes predominantly for car and vocational tests. This comes at a time when economic indicators are improving.

Short-term variation in test numbers can be driven by seasonal and weather factors (there are generally fewer practical tests in the winter, and particularly in months with severe weather). Regulatory and administrative changes can also have an effect, such as the changes in January 2013 involving reviewing 100 questions used in the theory test question bank and the EU Directive changes affecting motorcycles, which are discussed in this release.

## Summary table: Driver and rider tests taken, and pass rates: Great Britain

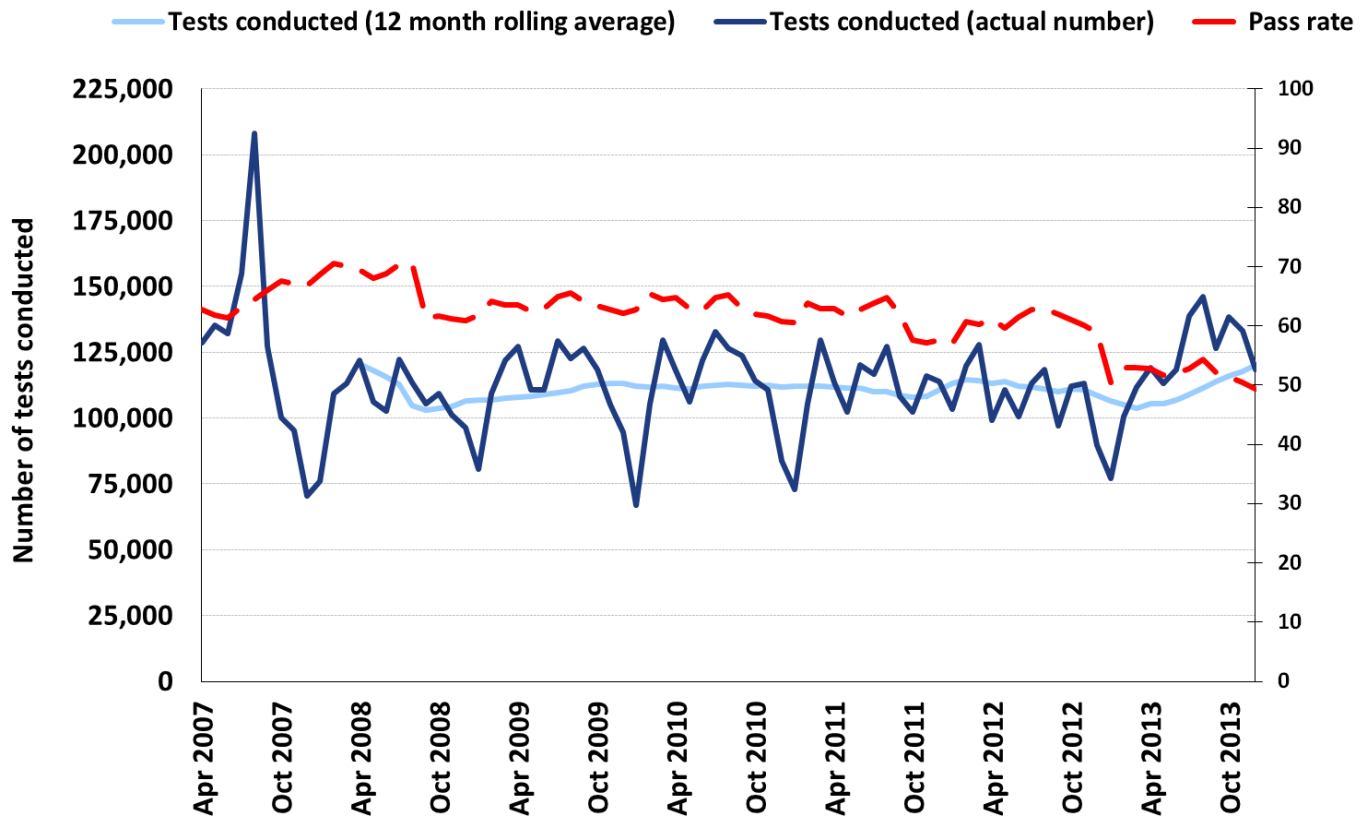
Test Type	Latest Quarter (October – December 2013)			
	Number of tests taken (thousands)	Compared to same qtr previous year	Pass rate (percentage)	Compared to same qtr previous year (percentage points)
Car theory	390	⬆️ +24%	50.5	⬇️ -9.6
Car practical	381	⬆️ +1%	46.6	⬇️ -0.1
Motorcycle theory	10.2	⬇️ -48%	74.5	⬆️ +2.8
Motorcycle practical module 1	10.1	⬇️ -49%	67.3	⬇️ -2.0
Motorcycle practical module 2	10.5	⬇️ -47%	69.4	⬆️ +0.8
LGV theory multiple choice	9.1	⬆️ +24%	65.9	⬇️ -10.5
LGV theory hazard perception	7.7	⬆️ +8%	80.5	⬇️ -0.1
Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) practical	12.2	⬆️ +4%	54.0	⬆️ +0.4
LGV theory CPC *	5.0	⬆️ +11%	65.4	⬆️ +2.9
PCV theory multiple choice	2.3	⬆️ +19%	67.2	⬇️ -7.7
PCV theory hazard perception	1.9	⬆️ +5%	80.4	⬇️ -1.5
Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) practical	2.2	⬆️ +1%	56.0	⬆️ +3.0
PCV theory CPC *	2.0	⬆️ +7%	44.6	⬆️ +2.5

\* - CPC = Certificate of Professional Competence

## 2. Car tests

### Theory car tests: Great Britain, April 2007 to December 2013

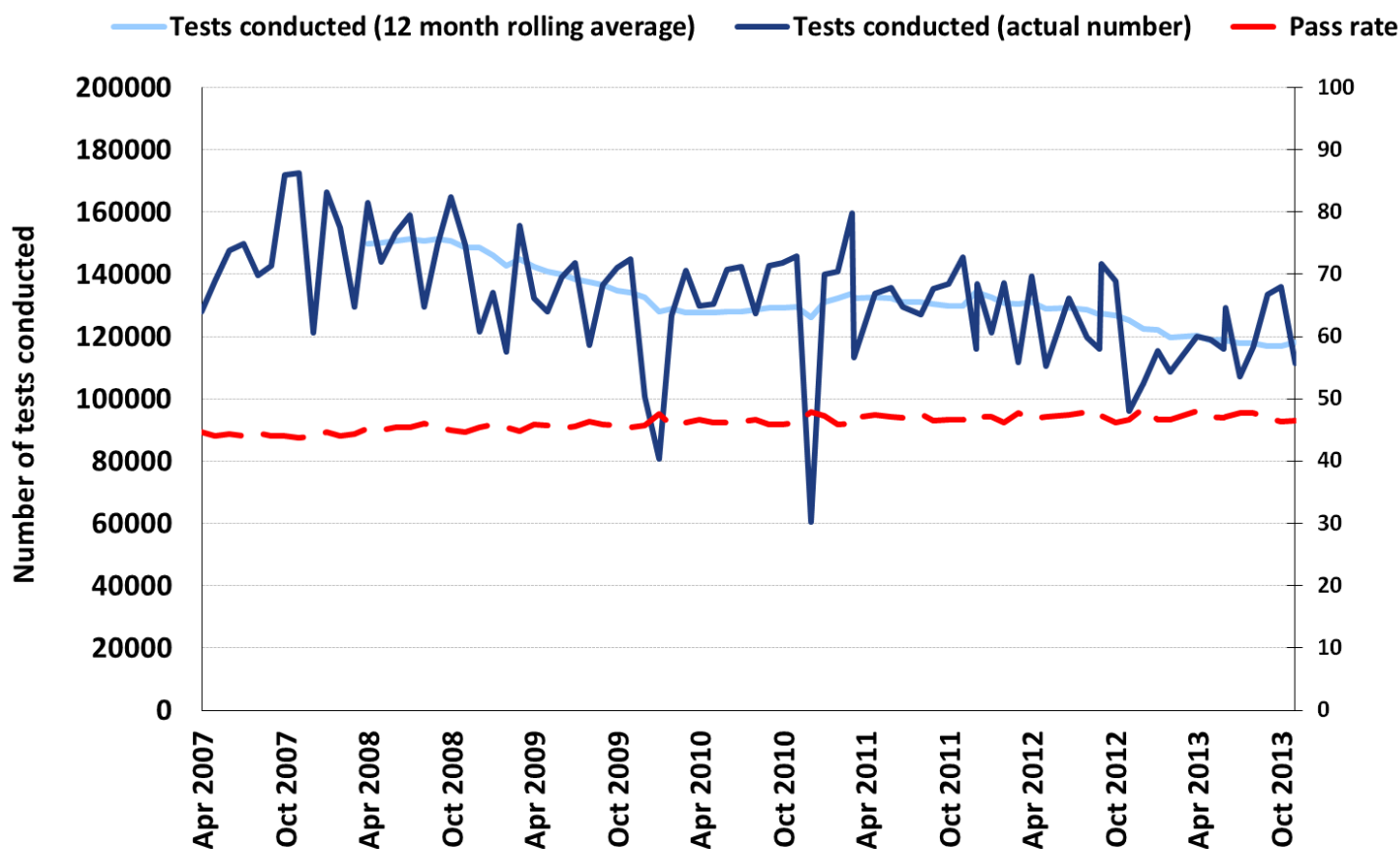
(Driving and Riding Tests web table DRT5201)



- From October to December 2013 there were 390,326 car theory tests conducted, 24 per cent more than the same quarter a year earlier.
- The pass rate for October to December 2013 was 50.5 per cent. This is 9.6 percentage points lower than the corresponding quarter a year ago. The current quarters' pass rate is 2.7 percentage points lower compared to the previous quarter (July to September 2013) but this is typical of the seasonal pattern.
- In January 2013 100 questions used in the theory test question bank were rewritten. The year on year drop in pass rate was due to the introduction of the first new, unpublished questions into the theory test papers. This reduction in the pass rate is contributing to the increase in the number of theory tests conducted, as more candidates re-take the test.
- The number of passes is 4 per cent higher than the same quarter last year. This is a continuation from the previous quarter (July to September 2013) where passes were 6.4 per cent higher.

## Practical car tests: Great Britain, April 2007 to December 2013

(Driving and Riding Tests web table DRT0201)



- There were 381,024 car practical tests conducted from October to December 2013. This is 1 per cent higher compared to the same quarter in the previous year. We have experienced a milder winter in comparison to previous years, which may have contributed to this small increase.
- The pass rate for October to December was 46.6 per cent. This is marginally below the 46.7 percent for the same period a year ago.

### 3. Motorcycle tests

On 19 January 2013, the EU 3<sup>rd</sup> Directive came into force in the UK. This directive limits the engine size of bikes that can be ridden by riders under the age of 24<sup>8</sup>. This led to a surge in tests for this age group for both theory and practical tests prior to this date, followed by a drop resulting in a lower than normal number of tests –which has continued through October to December 2013.

#### Theory Test

- There were 10,197 motorcycle theory tests conducted from October to December 2013, 48.1 per cent fewer than the same quarter a year earlier.

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- The pass rate has increased by 2.8 percentage points to 74.5 per cent when compared to the same quarter a year ago.

### **Practical (module 1 and 2) Tests**

- There were 10,111 module 1 and 10,517 module 2 tests conducted during October to December 2013. These figures represent a 48.7 per cent and a 46.6 per cent reduction in testing respectively compared to the previous year, since the previous year was prior to the introduction of the EU 3<sup>rd</sup> Directive.
- The pass rate fell by 2 percentage points to 67.3 per cent this quarter compared to the same period a year ago for module 1 and rose by 0.8 per cent on module 2 to 69.4 per cent.

## **4. Large goods vehicle (LGV) and passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) tests**

For both LGVs and PCVs, separate multiple choice and hazard perception tests must be passed before candidates can take the practical test. In May 2013 there was a question refresh for the multiple choice tests for both LGV and PCV. As we saw with the change to the car theory test in January, this led to an increase in the number of LGV and PCV multiple choice tests before the change, and a reduction in the pass rate after the change.

### **Theory Tests**

- The number of LGV multiple choice theory tests increased by 23.9 per cent to 9,072 during October to December 2013 compared to the same quarter a year ago. PCV saw 15.3 per cent more tests (2,258) conducted this quarter when compared to the same period a year ago.
- The pass rates for the multiple choice theory tests during October to December fell by 10.5 percentage points to 65.9 per cent and 7.7 percentage points to 67.2 per cent for LGV and PCV respectively compared to the same period a year before.
- The number of hazard perception theory tests was also higher during this quarter compared to a year ago. For LGV tests went up by 8.2 per cent to 7,702 and for PCV by 4.8 per cent to 1,933 with similar or marginally higher pass rates than a year ago.

### **Practical Tests**

- There were 12,184 LGV practical tests during October to December 2013, 4.3 per cent more than during the same quarter of the previous year. The pass rate marginally improved by 0.5 per cent to 54 per cent over the same period
- After the sharp drop in LGV testing coinciding with the onset of the economic downturn, we are beginning to see early signs of growth. This again coincides with news of an improving economy.
- There were 2,245 PCV tests during October to December 2013, in line with the same quarter the year before. The pass rate increased by 3 percentage points to 56 per cent over the same period.

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## 6. Driving and riding instructors

### Numbers of instructors currently registered

- At the end of December 2013/4, there were 43,289 approved driving instructors (ADIs) on the ADI Register, 4.6 per cent down on one year previously.
- Alongside the ADIs, there were 2,647 motorcycle riding instructors on the Statutory Register at end of December, 10.7 per cent less than one year earlier.

### Checks on existing instructors

- From October to December 2013, 3,260 check tests were conducted on ADIs. This was a decrease of 30 per cent compared with the same quarter in the previous year. This decrease is due to commencement of examiner training in preparation for the new standards check which is being introduced from 7 April 2014. At the end of December, 48 per cent of all currently graded ADIs scored a grade four, 35 per cent a grade five and 6 per cent a grade six<sup>9</sup>. No ADI scored a grade one and 1 per cent scored a grade two or three.
- Compulsory basic test (CBT) instructors also undergo check tests. Of the 187 tests undertaken during the quarter, 160 (86 per cent) had a 'Satisfactory' result.

### New applicants, and theory and practical ADI tests

- The number of first applications during October to December 2013 to become a driving instructor was 1,692 which is an increase of 14 per cent when compared to the same period last year.
- There were 1,597 ADI theory tests conducted during October to December 2013, this is in line with the same quarter a year ago. The pass rate fell by 2.9 percentage points, to 46.6 per cent.
- During October to December 2013, 984 Part 2 and 1,013 Part 3 practical ADI tests were conducted. This represents falls of 13.4 per cent and 23.8 per cent respectively compared to the same period a year ago. Pass rates for the ADI part 2 practical test remained fairly static in comparison to same quarter of the previous year. However the ADI part 3 practical test pass rate fell by 1.9 percentage points to 30.1 per cent.

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## 7. Background notes

1. Practical test categories included are B (car), B1 (tricycles and quadricycles), A, A1 and A2 (motorcycles), C, C1 (medium and large goods vehicles), C+E, C1+E (medium/large goods vehicles with trailers), D, D1 (minibuses and buses), D+E and D1+E (minibuses / buses with trailers).
2. The [Driver and Rider Tests and Instructors](#) web page provides further detail of the key findings presented in this statistical release, including detailed data tables.
3. These official statistics are not designated National Statistics. They are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.
4. The next release of statistics will be published in June 2014 and will provide information for the final quarter of the 2013 financial year (January to March 2014) and for the financial year as a whole.
5. Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found in the [Pre-release access list](#).
6. The Driving Standards Agency also publishes [operational data](#) by test centre.
7. Additional data on ethnicity of candidates are released via [www.data.gov.uk](http://www.data.gov.uk). This information is not published as part of the statistical release as only circa 30 per cent of candidates declare their ethnicity. It is, therefore, highly likely that the information is subject to self-selection and reporting biases and neither the DSA nor DfT would recommend that users rely on these data being a true reflection of the ethnicity of all candidates. The data are being provided simply for information and as they are frequently request under the Freedom of Information Act.
8. For further information on the impact of the EU 3<sup>rd</sup> Directive to rider licensing please visit - <https://www.gov.uk/ride-motorcycle-moped/bike-categories-ages-and-licence-requirements>.
9. Grades run from 1 – extremely poor overall performance, to 6 – very high overall performance